

PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION.

27. **Agriculture.**—Copies of Dr. Kunjan Pillai's report for 1092 will, as usual, be placed in your hands from which you will be able to obtain detailed information regarding the working of the Agricultural Department during the year. The Manager of the Silk farm at Trivandrum was deputed to Upper India to study the latest methods of sericulture. Of the twelve pupils who attended the Silk school at Nantankode opened by the Salvation Army in 1091, seven were successful in the final examination, and five of them have started the industry in their native villages. To encourage them in their new enterprise, Government have sanctioned them a monthly grant of Rs. 5 each for one year and an initial grant of Rs. 30 each for the purchase of appliances. The possibility of cultivating tapioca on poor laterite soils under the application of cattle manure and green leaf and the advantage of rotating tapioca on such soils with hill-paddy, horse-gram and banana, were successfully demonstrated. Substantial progress was made in the soil survey of the State and a bulletin was published describing the general characteristics of the different kinds of soils. The analysis of green leaf manures was completed and a leaflet was issued on the subject. The number of leaflets issued by the department till the close of 1092 was 78. Arrangements have been made for the reprinting of these leaflets in one convenient volume for sale to the public at a nominal price. With a view to impart some knowledge in Agriculture to the children of the cultivating classes, two night schools were opened in the Experimental farms at Trivandrum and Nagercoil and 36 pupils are attending these schools. Since the close of 1092, revised rules for the treatment of animals in the Government Veterinary hospitals and dispensaries have been issued, under which no fees need be paid for the treatment of out-patient animals, while only nominal fees at certain prescribed rates will be charged for in-patients.

28. **Fisheries.**—Two sardine nets of a type not commonly used in the State were demonstrated at Trivandrum and Alleppey with successful results. With a view to develop deep sea fishing, it is proposed to send a few fishermen to Tanur for training at Government cost. The fish-curing yard at Muttam, in which the number of operations carried on rose from 196 in 1091 to 1,036 in 1092, has, since the close of the year, been transferred from the Excise to the Fisheries Department. Government have also sanctioned the opening of another fish-curing yard and a fish-oil factory at Alleppey. For the purpose of enabling the department to study the life-history and habits of fresh water and backwater fishes, sanction has been accorded to the opening of two fish-breeding farms at Quilon. A night school in the Vaikam taluk for imparting general as well as professional instruction to the children of the Vala community has also been sanctioned. The fishery rules brought into operation in 1091 have been revised so as to afford greater relief to fishermen. The activities of this growing department are being carefully watched.

29. **Industries.**—The Industrial Survey of the State to which I made reference last year was begun on the 1st Makaram, 1092. As the period of one year for which Dr. Barker was placed on special duty for the purpose was found insufficient, that period has since been extended by another year, *i. e.*, till the 1st Makaram 1094. During the first year, Dr. Barker was able to survey 18 taluks, in addition to the towns of Trivandrum and Kottayam. The method of enquiry was to hold industrial conferences of the leading citizens and ryots and to organise industrial development committees of three members each for every *pakuthi*. These committees were asked to fill up printed enquiry forms, the entries made by them being subsequently verified by the Special Officer. Dr. Barker is now engaged in the preparation of two special reports, one a talukwar report explaining the economic and industrial conditions of the several *pakuthies*, and the other a report on each industry taken separately. Portions of these reports have already been received by the Government. Popular interest in industrial questions is being evoked by means of personal interviews and public lectures. Bulletins on industrial subjects are being published from time to time and their Vernacular translations distributed broadcast. Government have recently granted the right of collecting conch shells to Mr. L. A. Netto of Valiathura for a period of 20 years on the stipulation that Mr. Netto

should set up the necessary plant for button-making out of conch shells within one year of the date of grant and that he should popularise button manufacture as a cottage industry among the coast fishermen. The organisation of several other industries is being also stimulated wherever practicable. The industrial development of the country requires in a pre-eminent degree the hearty co-operation of the people to supplement the efforts of Government.

30. Industrial training.—Under the scheme for the award of scholarships for industrial and technical studies, four foreign scholarships of the annual value of £. 150 and two Indian scholarships of the monthly value of Bh. Rs. 50 each were given to six candidates, five of whom are graduates and all born subjects of His Highness the Maha Raja. The subjects of study selected for them are chemical engineering and industry, weaving and dyeing, soap and oils, tanning and leather manufacture, manufacture of shellac, sealing wax, etc., and wood distillation. All these students are reported to be progressing satisfactorily, and it is hoped that their return after training will afford additional impetus to the cause of industrial advancement in the State.

31. Co-operative Societies.—The total number of co-operative societies at the end of 1092 was 40. Of the 14 new societies registered in 1092, 12 are credit societies, while the remaining two are societies for purchase and sale. The work of the department during the year was marked more by consolidation than by expansion. The total number of members rose from 945 to 2,034, the working capital of the societies from Bh. Rs. 74,987 to Bh. Rs. 1,37,122 and the paid-up share capital from Bh. Rs. 13,537 to Bh. Rs. 24,710. A noteworthy feature of the year's work is the special attention bestowed on the organisation of a few societies for the relief of backward classes. The most conspicuous among such societies is the agricultural credit society registered at Muttam in the Kartikapalli taluk, which has been started with the object of helping Pulayas. Credit societies have also been organised in certain centres for the benefit of those following the industries of fishing and weaving in addition to agriculture. Agricultural credit continued to be the main form of co-operation in demand. Government are glad to learn from the Registrar's report that a spirit of mutual trust and confidence is developing among the members, and that agriculture, trade and industries have begun to receive support from co-operative societies. Since the close of the year, the restrictions imposed on Government servants in the matter of becoming office-bearers of co-operative societies have been relaxed. I avail myself of this opportunity to once again exhort you, Members of the Assembly, to do your best to make the co-operative movement a success in Travancore.

32. Public Works.—The question of the development of minor roads, for which there is insistent demand, has for some time past been engaging the anxious attention of the Government and the Chief Engineer. Mr. Bastow has now submitted a scheme for the formation of local boards for dealing with this question. The scheme is under the consideration of the Government.

33. Railway.—It is a source of genuine gratification to me to be in a position to announce to you that the Quilon-Trivandrum Railway was opened for traffic on the 1st January, 1918. What with the difficulty of securing rolling stock for the Railway at this time of war, and with the abnormal and unforeseen engineering difficulties presented by the Paravur and Kilimukku embankments, the prospects of the early completion and opening of the line were gloomy some time ago, and it is due to the generous sympathy of the Government of India and the professional skill of Mr. O'Shaughnessy, the Deputy Chief Engineer of the Railway in charge of construction, that it has been possible for His Highness the Maha Raja to confer this great benefit on the people now. The total length of the line is $37\frac{3}{4}$ miles. The revised estimate originally received from the South Indian Railway Company for Bh. Rs. 54,02,579 was scrutinised again and reduced ultimately to Bh. Rs. 52,98,090. The amount spent on the construction of the line up to the close of 1917 is Bh. Rs. 46,56,684. Government are aware that the present service of one train up and one down between Quilon and Trivandrum is inadequate to meet the demands of traffic on the line and every endeavour is being made to increase the number of trains running either way.